

# Medical Practice Questions

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** From time to time medical practice questions of general interest are referred to the Scientific Board by the Quality Care Review Commission of the California Medical Association. Each is sent to members of the appropriate Scientific Advisory Panel.\* Their responses are collated, reviewed and then submitted to the Quality Care Review Commission as the Scientific Board's opinion on the scientific and practice aspects of the question. The Commission adds suggestions to assist peer review units and authorizes publication.

These opinions and positions are informational only and are not intended to be used as instructions, directives or policy statements. The appropriateness of care in individual cases should not be determined by these answers, but should be reviewed by local peer review committees.

Questions and reprint requests may be submitted to the Medical Practice Questions Committee, Quality Care Review Commission, California Medical Association, 731 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

## Radial Keratotomy

### QUESTION:

*Is radial keratotomy considered acceptable medical treatment for correction of myopia?*

### OPINION:

It is the unanimous opinion of the Advisory Panel on Ophthalmology that radial keratotomy is an experimental procedure. This panel also strongly advocates that radial keratotomy be done only with the approval and control of an investigational review committee.

## Morbid Obesity

### QUESTION:

*(1) What are suitable guidelines for differentiating morbid from nonmorbid obesity in case selection for surgical relief?*

*(2) What are currently acceptable indications for gastroplastic surgery in the treatment of morbid obesity?*

### OPINION:

It is the opinion of the Advisory Panels on General Surgery and Internal Medicine that

(1) Morbid obesity may be defined using all of the following criteria:

- (a) patient is more than 100 pounds overweight;
- (b) prolonged attempts at dieting have not been successful;
- (c) there are complications due to excessive

weight; for example, respiratory insufficiency, hypertension, diabetes or psychosocial impairment.

(2) Currently acceptable indications for surgery include all of the following:

- (a) patient is more than 100 pounds overweight;
- (b) patient is between 18 and 50 years of age;
- (c) absence of serious diseases contraindicating surgery;
- (d) all methods of nonsurgical therapy have failed;
- (e) surgical operation should be part of a comprehensive plan which includes preoperative and postoperative exercise, diet counseling and behavioral treatment.

## Re-review of Mucous Membrane (Sublingual) Desensitization

### QUESTION:

*Is mucous membrane (sublingual) desensitization of proved therapeutic value in the treatment of allergy disorders?*

### OPINION:

The Advisory Panels on Allergy, General and Family Practice, and Otolaryngology believe that studies have reconfirmed that mucous membrane (sublingual) desensitization is not of proved therapeutic value in the treatment of allergy disorders.

## Dimethyl Sulfoxide

### QUESTION:

*Is it acceptable medical practice to use dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) in treatment of pain associated with arthritic conditions (or musculoskeletal pain)?*

\*The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association has a Scientific Advisory Panel for each of 24 recognized specialties of medical practice. Each Advisory Panel includes representation from the appropriate department of each of the eight medical schools in California, representatives of specialty societies in the field and representatives from the Specialty Sections of the Association. The Advisory Panels are thus broadly and authoritatively based in both academia and practice.

**OPINION:**

It is the belief of the Advisory Panels on Orthopedics, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Internal Medicine, Neurology and General Surgery that it is not acceptable medical practice. The use of DMSO for the purpose of relieving arthritis pain has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Controlled studies have not yet been conducted which document the efficacy of using DMSO and delineate its toxicology.

**Esterene**

**QUESTION:**

*Is the use of Esterene recognized as an accepted medical practice in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis?*

**OPINION:**

In the opinion of Advisory Panels on Internal Medicine and Orthopedics, there is no scientific evidence to support the use of Esterene, which is derived from cocaine, for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

**Radioallergosorbent Test (RAST)**

**QUESTION:**

*Is the radioallergosorbent test (RAST) a recognized and effective allergy test?*

**OPINION:**

The Advisory Panels on Allergy, Internal Medicine, and Otolaryngology believe that the radioallergosorbent test (RAST) is a recognized and effective test. It is more expensive and less sensitive than direct skin testing. The majority of respondents think that RAST should be used for diagnosis in selected patients for whom skin testing is inappropriate or equivocal. Because of its expense, reasons for the use of RAST should be documented.

**Paper Radioimmunosorbent Test (PRIST)**

**QUESTION:**

*Is the paper radioimmunosorbent test (PRIST) a recognized and effective allergy test?*

**OPINION:**

In the opinion of the Advisory Panels on Allergy, Internal Medicine and Otolaryngology, the paper radioimmunosorbent test (PRIST) is a recognized and effective test for the determination of serum concentrations of IgE antibody and may be useful, together with other evidence, in the diagnosis of allergy. It should not be used routinely but rather in instances where there is some question about the diagnosis of allergy.

**Singer-Blom Valve**

**QUESTION:**

*Is it accepted medical practice to perform the Singer-Blom valve operation for rehabilitation of laryngectomy patients?*

**OPINION:**

The Advisory Panel on Otolaryngology is of the opinion that tracheoesophageal speech shunt procedures for vocal rehabilitation are accepted medical practice.

**Clinical Ecology**

**QUESTION:**

*What is "clinical ecology"? Is this a recognized medical specialty?*

**OPINION:**

It is the recommendation of the Advisory Panels on Allergy, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Preventive Medicine and Public Health and the Committee on Environmental Health, as well as the CMA Council, that "clinical ecology" is not a recognized medical specialty and does not have a single, standardized definition among medical practitioners.

**Cytotoxic Testing for Food Allergy**

**QUESTION:**

*Is cytotoxic testing for food allergy considered acceptable medical practice?*

**OPINION:**

It is the opinion of the Advisory Panel on Allergy that cytotoxic testing for food allergy has not been proved to be an effective or accepted medical practice and should be reserved for experimental use only.